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Narcissistic elements in Lermontov's work

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нию,постижению,сквозь призму поэтического сознания, важнейших проблем социальной действительности.Тесные связи поэта с процессом развития русской общественной мысли ,зависимость его от идейных исканий свидетельствуют о зрелости политического сознания поэта и его мужественном взгляде на окружающую действительность". /26/

Soviet criticism dealing with A Hero of Our Time provides a good illustration of this socio-political orientation. Most Soviet critics see Pechorin as a kind of "revolutionary manqué" [27], which is hardly justified by textual evidence although, naturally the novel has its "social" aspect. But there is not one word of a political nature in the novel and Pechorin's tragic and destructive life is the result of personal rather than political or other circumstances. However, viewed from the Marxist-Leninist point of view, the emphasis on external influences is of crucial

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26) Gorodetsky, B. Istoriya russkoy poezii, L., Izd-vo Nauka, 1968, 500.

27) This term is used by Paul Foote in his introduction to A Hero of Our Time in M. Yu. Lermontov, A Hero of Our Time, Penguin Books, England, 1966, p. 13.

importance as, according to Marxist-Leninist anthropology, evil is never due to man's propensity for evil, but only to social injustice. Consequently, Soviet critics present Pechorin as an inevitable victim of his times, who despite his "heroic" qualities, lacks opportunities for self-fulfillment and having no outlets for his talents, devotes himself to antisocial activities.

" Печорин-жертва своего тяжелого времени. Лермонтов понимает и представляет своего героя как пример того какими становятся лучшие,сильнейшие,благороднейшие люди под влиянием общественной обстановки их круга." /28/

The opposition between Soviet Marxist and Idealist aesthetics also manifests itself in regard to critical evaluation of Russian Romanticism and the place which Lermontov occupies within this literary tradition. Approaching the movement on the basis of socio-ideological considerations, Soviet critics introduce an ideologically motivated distinction dividing the movement into two separate schools, namely revolutionary and reactionary Romanticism.

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28) Lomunov, K. O Lermontove i ego romane M., Dets. Lit., 1967, 13.

While seeing reactionary Romanticism in a negative light and its hero as an escapist individual passively resigned to an unsatisfactory existence, Soviet critics extol revolutionary Romanticism for its rebellious stance and consider association with this trend to be of greater literary and ideological value.

" Герои революционного романтизма представляют собой полную противоположность многочисленным героям романтических поэм школы Жуковского-Козлова,где поэтизируется разрыв с бренным и греховным миром,а романтический идеал выносится за пределы земной жизни. Для характера героев революционного романтизма можно найти "родную душу" в поэмах декабристов с которыми роднит их и любовь к родине и жажда свободы и весь душевный строй декабристского героя-гражданина". /29/

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29) Sokolov, A. Ocherki po istorii russkoy poemy XVIII-XIX v., Izd. Moskovskogo Universiteta, 1955, 605.

Accordingly, Soviet critics include every writer of the day who cultivated civic themes, even in the vaguest of terms, in the category of "revolutionary Romanticism". Furthermore, they include virtually every one they "approve of" in it, whether he wrote on political themes or not. In this case they attribute "submerged" rebellious moods to him. As Soviet critics approve of Lermontov he is said to be a representative of the revolutionary - romantic variety and interpreted as such by most Soviet literary historians and critics.

" Развивая традиции революционного романтизма,Лермонтов показал себя глубоко оригинальным поэтом создавшим свой поэтический мир,романтически отразивший современную ему действительность и романтически ей противопоставленный."

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Typical of this evaluation of Lermontov as a revolutionary romantic is A.N. Sokolov's study Revolutionary Romanticism in Lermontov's Poems, which views, for example, the romantic poem "Mtsyri" as an ideological clash between the forces of oppression represented by a monastery and the hero's "unquenchable thirst" for freedom.

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30) op.cit., p.606.

" Итак в романтическом образе Мцыри Лермонтову удалось создать героический характер пламенного борца против гнета и насилия во имя свободной и счастливой жизни". /31/

A similar protest against all forms of political oppression is perceived by I. Andronikov in his study of "The Demon".

" Наделенный исполинской силой страсти и несокрушимой волей,воплотившей в себе идею свободы и отрицания существующего порядка, лермонтовский "Демон" воспринимался... как символ личности свободной,гордой и непокорной". /32/

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31) Sokolov, A. Revolyutsionny romantizm v poemakh Lermontova M., Izd. M.G.U 1965, 63.

32) Andronikov, I. Lermontov - Issledovaniya i nakhodki, M., Izd.-vo Khudozhestvennaya Literatura, 1964, 566.

Another example of an overtly political approach is S. Ivanov's interpretation of the drama "Masquerade". Quoting lines out of context, he deliberately misconstrues the literary text to support his prejudices. The critic, for example, ignores the overt content of Kazarin's statement that gamblers are punished by exile to Siberia or imprisoned at the Petropavlovskaya prison, attributing political significance to the statement on the mere ground that these places are customarily associated with the Decembrist revolt. In Ivanov's interpretation the dissolute gambler Kazarin emerges as a defiant political rebel with secret Decembrist sympathies. Sokolov's and Andronikov's interpretations are typical of Marxist-Leninist criticism in general, for while they center on the dynamics of historical events, they ignore the fact that the diverse facets of an individual's life are not born of the social - political order alone. Particularly in Lermontov's case psychological factors cannot be overlooked, as the poet, never having attained harmony within himself, stresses the unresolved contradictions of human nature, tortured by existential and spiritual fetters rather than concrete prison walls. This contrast between materialist and idealist interpretation is central to the discussion of the psychological aspects of the study of art. Idealist aesthetics see artistic creativity not as a reflection of life, but as a form of artistic self

expression. Consequently, the psychological approach, is based on the analysis of subjective reality as it is experienced by the author himself. Marxist-Leninist aesthetics, on the other hand, art as a manifestation of social co. and as a specific form of the reproduct. of reality. As a result, art is examined as a psychological phenomenon, the essence of which consists solely in depicting the world of social relations and man's relation to reality, perceived as being objectively knowable.

Another point of distinction between the two approaches relates to the differing perception of time in the theories in question. Whilst psychoanalysis is both deterministic and a-historical, materialist psychology is inextricably linked to the tenets of historical materialism and progressivism. Any psychological view that falls short of a forthright assertion of the independent existence of the external world and the dependent, derivative nature of mental life is met by the Soviet school of psychology with total rejection and regarded as a socially harmful viewpoint. It cannot admit of an atemporal psyche as this would contradict the notion of progressivism making, for example, the vision of a new man impossible.

An example of the Marxist-Leninist psychological approach can been seen in L. Karancsy's study entitled "Self-analysis and psychological representation" [33], which offers an analysis of Lermontov's major fiction. Despite its psychoanalytic title, the article does not concern itself with psychological analysis as such, but deals with a broader examination of Lermontov's heroes in relation to their specific historical circumstances :

"Характерно,что психологические записки Печорина,в своем большинстве представляют собой не изображение душевного состояния в узком смысле,а... филссофски углубленные размышления для которых данное душевное состояние или переживание служит лишь исходным пунктом." /34/

To dispel any doubt as to what those "deep philosophical reflections" are, Karancsy adds that any anti-historical attempts to view Lermontov's work out of time and place must be irrevocably repudiated

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33) Karanchi, L. "Samoanaliz i psikholcgicheskoye izobrazheniye", Slavica XVII, Debrecen 1981.

34) op.cit.,104.

by Marxist literary criticism. As can be seen from the above quotation, the psychological factors are viewed here as inseparable from other ideological considerations and approached in the light of the objectives implicit in Marxist-Leninist theory. This fact explains the polarity of approaches between the Soviet school of psychology and the psychoanalytic theory and the inadmissability of psychoanalysis proper as an accepted literary approach in Soviet criticism.

PART II

2. THE PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO LITERATURE

2.1. Framework of psychoanalytic interpretation

The term "psychoanalysis" refers to a theory of personality structure, application of this theory to other branches of knowledge and finally, to a specific psychotherapeutic technique. The above definition indicates in the first place, that psychoanalysis is a comprehensive psychology which includes within its conceptual framework both healthy and pathological aspects of psychic structure and function. It suggests in addition that this body of knowledge may be usefully extended to other disciplines. Freud applied his method of investigation to a wide spectrum of psychic phenomena and often drew on literary texts as illustration and inspiration for the psychoanalytic theory. Some of his psychoanalytic key concepts are based on references to literature, for example the names of fictional and mythological characters (Lady Macbeth, Oedipus, Narcissus) or poetic metaphors (Oceanic feeling).[1] The importance of

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1) It should be of interest to Russian readers that Soviet psychologists draw on their native literature and apply the term "Oblomov's syndrome" to patients who share the psychological condition of Goncharov's hero.

literature as a catalyst in psychoanalytic theorizing is very clear in Freud's famous studies of literary works. In his essay, "The Uncanny" [2] he attempts for example an interpretation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Sandman", relying on the principle of symbolic equivalence between the hero's conscious fears and his unconscious castration complex. Later, in his famous article "Dostoyevsky and Parricide" (1928), Freud examines the relation between Dostoyevsky's epilepsy and purported parricidal impulses, interpreting the writer's epilepsy as a symptom of an unresolved conflict between submission and revolt. Freud's article on Dostoyevsky, as well as his other psycho-literary endeavours, among them his early study of Leonardo da Vinci (1910), and his book on Moses (1939), created a lasting controversy among literary critics. This controversy centred on the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature.

The purpose of this chapter is to account briefly for the misunderstanding surrounding psychological criticism and to outline the theory of psychoanalysis as an interpretive tool in the understanding and appreciation of literature.

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2) Freud, S. "The Uncanny" (1919), in Freud on Creativity and the Unconscious, N Y, Harper 1958.

It is axiomatic that no single approach can exhaust the manifold interpretative possibilities of a literary work. Each approach has its own particular limitations which in turn narrow the purview of the theory it represents. As has been shown, the limitations of social criticism lie in its tendency to overlook the structural intricacies of a given literary work. The formalist approach, on the other hand, often neglects ideological and biographical contexts. In turn, the crucial limitation of the psychological approach is its aesthetic inadequacy, for although the psychological interpretation can afford many important insights into the meaning of a work, it often ignores the literary form as well as social and aesthetic aspects.

Crucial to the ensuing discussion is the notion that literary interpretation and psychoanalysis are two distinct fields, and that though they may be closely associated, they can in no sense be regarded as parts of one and the same discipline. As stated earlier, psychoanalysis is primarily a theory of personality development and data gathered through the interpretive technique of psychoanalysis serve to further this specific field of enquiry. When psychoanalysis is applied to literary texts as if these were actual case studies, far-fetched interpretations result. One can understand the

negative reaction of Dostoyevsky's biographer Joseph Frank [3] at Freud's attributing Dostoyevsky's genius to "an innately hysterical psychic constitution", or pointing to bisexual factors in Dostoyevsky upon a mere reading of "The Brothers Karamazov". Freud's study of Leonardo da Vinci's art which he approaches in the light of the artist's psychosexual history is of theoretical significance to psychoanalysis but perhaps not to art history. Freud's of Leonardo's paintings as a disguised . phantasy determined by his homosexuality lacks a balanced artistic perspective and oversimplifies the complex nature of artistic creativity. The above examples highlight the fact that psychoanalytic explanation per se does not make for literary relevance. The claims of traditional psychoanalytic interpretations that the symbolic quality of a literary work represents a mere camouflage concealing psychoanalytic facts underlying the visible content, rendered psychoanalysis vulnerable to criticism and has contributed to its condemnation as a respectable literary approach.

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3) Frank, J. Dostoyevsky - The Seeds of Revolt 1821 - 1849, London: Robson Books, 1977, in particular Freud's Case-History of Dostoyevsky pp. 379 - 393.

The contemporary school of psychoanalytic literary criticism proposes a fundamental reorientation of the relationship between the two disciplines arguing that neither discipline dominates the other, since both represent two different fields of competence. Furthermore, it postulates a deconstruction of the very structure of the opposition implied in the relationship and "relates psychoanalysis and literature in such a way that they may complement each other's knowledge without compromising their uniqueness".[4] In view of this shift of emphasis, the traditional method of application of psychoanalysis to literature is seen as no longer operative and is replaced by the notion of implication, inferring to a different manner of the methodogical and theoretical implications of the relationship. Shoshana Felman, in her book "Literature and Psychoanalysis" [5] views the interpreter's role in this newly constituted relationship as "not to apply to the text an acquired science, a preconceived knowledge, but to act as a go-between, to generate implications between literature and psychoanalysis - to explore,

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4) Kurzwell, E(ed.) Literature and Psychoanalysis, New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

5) Felman, S. Literature and Psychoanalysis - The Question of Reading : Otherwise The Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore. 1982.

bringing analytical questions to bear upon literary questions, involving psychoanalysis in the scene of literary analysis and to articulate the various (indirect) ways in which the two domains do indeed implicate each other, each one finding itself enlightened, informed, but also affected, displaced by the other." [6]

Apart from the complexity inherent in the relationship between psychoanalysis and literature, the psychoanalytic method itself comprises divergent approaches reflecting the interpretive assumptions of diverse schools. During Freud's lifetime, psychoanalysis was unified in the sense that only what he did was called analysis. After Freud's death tensions became increasingly apparent, as researchers, both disciples and revisionists, developed their own versions of psychoanalysis. The conflicting claims in regard to psychoanalysis have parallels in the field of psychoanalytic literary criticism, which ranges from the traditionally Freudian application as exemplified in the work of Ernest Jones and Henry A. Murray to extreme analytic deviations characteristic of the French psycho-literary scene.

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6) op.cit., p.9.

I do not intend either to identify the various psychoanalytic practices or to describe all the ramifications of psychoanalysis. The aim of the present chapter is rather to report and explain the meaning of some of Freud's ideas insofar as they are applicable to art, keeping in mind the reservations made above. My approach is then a modified Freudian approach. I rely on the developments and revisions of Freud's basic notions such as developed by M. Klein, O. Kernberg and others. Their theories will be discussed in chapter 2.2.

The core of Freud's contribution to modern psychology is his emphasis on the unconscious aspects of the human psyche. Through his many carefully recorded studies Freud provided convincing evidence, that most human actions are motivated by psychic forces over which man exercises very limited control. He demonstrated that, like the iceberg, the human mind is so structured that its greatest mass lies beneath the surface. The conscious portion of the mind is related to the small part of the iceberg above the water; the preconscious is equivalent to the section that rises above and falls below the waterline with the sea's motion, and the unconscious is likened to the hidden bulk, which although concealed, nevertheless is the largest and most important area of influence. Freud further emphasizes the importance of the unconscious by

pointing out the dynamic quality of the unconscious processes influencing and moulding conscious thought and action. One of Freud's major assumptions is that all drives, conflicts and various other psychological events which influence and shape outward behaviour originate in the unconscious, and that unconscious motivation only with great difficulty, if at all, can be transformed into consciousness. The cause of this difficulty is, in Freud's view, to be found in a repressive system, which resists any attempt to bring unconscious elements to the level of consciousness. Thus, a great deal of childhood, said to be "forgotten", in the sense of having faded with the passage of time, is according to psychoanalytic theory, subject to a process of repression. These childhood experiences, although repressed lose none of their force and continually seek their own mode of expression. Freud consistently maintained that "repression is the cornerstone of my theory" [7] and continued to look for the final explanation of human behaviour in a battle between a latent wish and a manifest defensive disguise.

Traditional psychoanalytic literary criticism aims at illustrating the interplay between a character's

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7) Freud, S. On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement (1914).

unacknowledged wishes and the manifest meaning expressed in a literary text.

Critics, who equate a literary text with the unconscious meaning alone reduce valuable insights about human behaviour to trivial oral and anal fixations, substituting the textual explanation with a "self-explanatory" psychoanalytic tag. Such reductions ignore the surface reality and, in doing so, paradoxically destroy the only content in which the depth can effective. On the other hand, reference to literary surface alone, without examination of the underlying motives deprives the text of a "psychic complexity", which psychoanalytic criticism is uniquely suited to explore. Let us examine Freud's theory of creativity more in detail.

In his essay on the psychoanalytic theory of literature "Creative Writers and Daydreaming" (1908), Freud presents the daydream as the building block of the imagination rooted in the unconscious wishes of childhood experience. He holds that the process of daydreaming is the starting point of a phantasy life, which enables the child to reconcile and express the opposing needs of aggression and restoration. Freud suggests that this stage of development occurs when the infant begins to relate to his mother and gradually to other people in his environment as whole and as separate persons, in

contrast with an earlier stage, where no such clear perception exists. Confronted with the wholeness and separateness of the parents, the infant, and later the child, experiences the impact of his own ambivalence towards them. In his experience of separation, he hates them and, in his mind, attacks them. Since the infant at that early stage of development feels his wishes and phantasies to be omnipotent, he feels that the parents thus attacked become fragmented and destroyed and he introjects[8] them as such into his internal world to protect himself against fragmentation and destruction. However, since the child also loves his parents and needs them, this destruction brings about feelings of mourning, loss and a longing to undo the damage done and to restore, in his mind, the parents to their original state. In Freud's view the same unconscious wishes and conflicts that play so large a part in the production of daydream phantasy are equally responsible, although in a modified form for literary production. He holds that every artistic creation involves an act of aggression originating in this phantasy of the parental destruction and the urge of recreating a whole new world as a means of symbolic restoration of the destroyed and lost structure.

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8) This term refers to a process by which the functions of an external object are taken over by its mental representation.

Although the satisfaction of the instinctual wishes which is afforded the child through play is granted to the writer by his work, the workings of the creative imagination are ultimately far removed from the play of the child. The artist, unlike the child, is endowed with an intuitive psychological acuity enabling him to apprehend his own psychic processes and reconstruct them imaginatively in his work. The artist is aware that his creations symbolize aspects of his internal world but they represent neither him nor directly his internal objects. This enables the writer to have a certain objective detachment from his work and to maintain a sense of reality which clearly distinguishes his wishes and phantasy from the realities of the external world. It is implicit therefore, that while we cannot equate phantasy with artistic creativity or see artistic creation as the mere product of wish gratification, a better understanding of unconscious phantasies can nonetheless contribute to a more sensitive understanding of the many ways in which a phantasy can be related to a literary text.

The most fruitful suggestion about the role of phantasy for literary criticism developed by recent psychoanalytic schools is the notion that phantasy does not replace adult experience, but, instead, brings the intensities of childhood experience to

bear on current adult life. It adds depth by evoking the unconscious remnants of infantile experience, without substituting that experience for an adult one. Edmund Wilson provides an example of a critical approach which uses this psychoanalytic insight. He links the recurring scenes of childhood suffering in Dickens' novels to Dickens' own early experiences and suggests that the fictional scenes are "an attempt to digest these early shocks and hardships, to explain them, to justify himself in relation to them to give an intelligible picture of a world in which such things could occur."[9] The critic's emphasis on the external factors suggests furthermore, that in literature, the phantasy is never presented nakedly, but is seen in the light of sophisticated adult ways of thinking. According to Wilson, of central importance is not the mere presence of psychoanalytic material (the context), but rather the interplay between different materials organizing the structure (the concept).

The growing recognition of the structural formulation in the modes of mental functioning reflects the shifting emphasis in psychoanalytic theory from an early topographical model focusing on the context

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9) Wilson, E. "Dickens: The Two Scrooges", in The Wound and the Bow. New York and London: Oxford University Press, 1941, p.8.

of analytic productions to structural concepts which conceive mental activity in terms of the interaction of psychic structures. Of the various revisions and elaborations made by Freud in his notions of developmental concepts his discussion of primary and secondary thought processes necessitates a detailed examination, as, apart from its theoretical significance, it also bears on the nature of artistic creativity.

In his 1911 paper on the two principles of mental functioning,[10] Freud assumes a fundamental distinction between two opposing processes, - defining them as primary and secondary processes. He envisioned the primary process as a psychologically primitive form of thinking which is governed only by the need for gratification without any consideration of reality. Freud defined this process as characteristic of unconscious thinking and associated it with the operation of the pleasure principle, which has no other objective than that of immediate and spontaneous gratification.

This extremely unrealistic and primitive form of thinking Freud contrasted with the conscious and

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10) Freud, S. "Formulations Regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning" (1911) Collected Papers, Vol IV. Hogarth Press.

realistic thinking of the secondary process which is governed by the reality principle seeking to reduce the "unpleasure" of instinctual tension by adaptive, rather than spontaneous behaviour of the primary process. Freud argued that the activity of a second system was necessary since the first system, ordered to pleasure and satisfaction, could not achieve anything further than hallucinatory gratification. The function of the secondary process was thus conceived as controlling and detouring thought processes as required by the impact of reality.

Drawing on the distinction between the primary and secondary processes Freud postulated that artistic creativity contains an admixture of the two processes since it is governed by both the pleasure and the reality principles. Accordingly, he regarded artistic work as a combination of an intuitive choice and a reality component which introduces logical construction into an otherwise spontaneous flow of artistic production.

> "The artist is originally a man who turns away from reality because he cannot come to terms with the demand for the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction as it is first made, and who then in fantasy life allows full play to his erotic and ambitious wishes. But he finds a way of return from this world of fantasy back to reality; with his special gifts he moulds

> his fantasies into a new kind of reality, and men concede them a justification as valuable reflections of actual life" [11]

Notwithstanding the obvious significance of Freud's formulation, his distinction between primary and secondary processes brought a strong bias into the future development of psychoanalytic literary criticism. The neglect of the rational and realistic in favour of the irrational and fantastic led to a view that art is primarily a substitute gratification and sublimation of instinctual desires. Consequently, the preoccupation with the primary process on the part of literary critics continued to propagate itself at the expense of considering the interaction between the primary and secondary processes.[12]

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11) ibid.,p.19

12) The argument is that a literary text is little more than the embellisment by secondary revision of the vehicle for primary process activity. It reflects the approach to dreams outlined by Freud in The Interpretation of Dreams, which holds that the secondary revision is a falsification of the primary process in the dream. The secondary revision attempts to make the dream intelligible, but misunderstands it completely. Accordingly, it is only throught following the path of regression that he primary material can be found and the unfalsified dream revealed and examined.

These assumptions concerning the role of the primary process in creativity have largely been rejected by contemporary psychoanalysis.

Today it is recognized that conscious and unconscious thought are not necessarily in conflict but form a continuum with a dynamic structure. According to contemporary psychoanalytic theory, thinking occurs on many levels, some conscious, some subconscious, and yet other unconscious. Consequently, a literary work can no longer be regarded as the mere embodiment of the libidinal and aggressive drives of the primary process alone. On the other hand, the literary response would not present much of a problem and for that matter, literature not much of a challenge, if the response were a purely conscious and rational activity. Gill [13] uses the term "compromise formations" for activities that are the middlepoints of the primary and secondary process continuum and it is reasonable to accept that both the creative act of writing and the re-creative response to literature are such compromise formations.

The gradual realization that the unconscious contained structural aspects, as also an increasing

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13) Gill, M.M. "The Primary Process", Psychol Issues, (1967) 5 p. 259.

emphasis on the ego, led Freud to make a number of significant alterations in his thinking about the function of the mental apparatus.

The implications of this revised view of the ego are of particular significance for understanding the reorientation in psychoanalytic literary criticism. The work of Ernst Kris Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art[14] merits a detailed examination as, apart from its theoretical emphasis on the psychoanalytic ego psychology, it specifically deals with the application of the concept to the problems of art. According to Kris, the embryonic elements of artistic productions found in id-impulses, because of their fundamental sameness, account only for what is universal in human nature and thus tell us little about the ways in which one finished work differs from another. Kris holds that the concern of literary criticism should focus not merely on those impulses, hidden in the depths of the psyche, but rather deal with the ways in which the ego can defend itself against, distort and disguise the material of such phantasies and wishes. By focusing on the role of the ego, Kris emphasizes the higher

14) Kris, E. Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art, New York: International Universities Press, 1952.

mental nature of creativity. He feels that art expresses not only our relationship to the world as it is, but also the world as we wish it to be.

Looked at in this way psychoanalysis can offer a valid tool in the understanding and appreciation of literature. It is from these premises that I wish to examine the narcissistic syndrome in Lermontov's work which I see as the psychic subtext of his entire work.

2.2. Narcissism as a Psychoanalytic Concept

In his book The Culture of Narcissism[1] Christopher Lasch maintains that the use of the term "narcissism" by the recent critics is so indiscriminate that it retains little of its psychological content. He notes further that the theoretical precision about narcissism is particularly important as the concept is readily susceptible to "moralistic inflation"[2] and subject to widespread confusion of cause and effect. Heinz Kohut a prominent expert on narcissism, endorses this view, stating that although the emotional investment of the self is per se not pathological there exists a tendency to look at it with a negatively toned evaluation.[3]

The writings of Otto F. Kernberg, Margaret S. Mahler and James Masterson are of particular importance in the current literature on the narcissistic condition. Kernberg [4] attributes the development of

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1) Lasch, C. The Culture of Narcissism London: Sphere Books, 1980.

2) op.cit., p.32.

3) Kohut, H. "Forms and Transformation of Narcissism" Journal of American Psycho-Analytic Association (1966), vol.14, p243

4) Kernberg, C. Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism, New York: Jason Aronson, 1975.

the pathological ego structure of the narcissistic personalities to their inability to integrate good and bad images of themselves and others. According to Kernberg, this separation of good and bad parts is maintained through the process of splitting, which prevents the ego from achieving any meaningful integration of both self and object images.[5] Consequently, the ego functions of the narcissistic personalities do not mature fully, impairing their ability to manage affects and feelings and their ability to engage in mature interpersonal relationships. The effects of splitting are reflected in certain other aspects of narcissistic functioning, the most prominent of which is a tendency to idealization. The narcissistic individual often idealizes external objects, viewing them as totally good and powerful, thus assuring himself that the external object can protect him from the bad and destructive objects. The idealization may work in the reverse fashion as well. The individual may feel omnipotent in an attempt to deny any threat from the bad introjects.

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5) The term 'object' merits further explanation as it may be confusing to readers who are more familiar with 'object' in the sense of an inanimate 'thing'. In psychoanalytic writings however, objects are usually persons, parts of persons or symbols of these two.

He may waver between idealization and devaluation of the object, or between over-evaluation and devaluation of the self. These feelings frequently have a "magic" quality which reflects the operation of mechanisms of projection and introjection - at once expelling evil aspects out of the self and putting them in objects, leaving the self good and strong, or again taking them in again, thus making the self weak, helpless and evil.

Mahler's view[6] of the sequential development of the narcisstic problematics is generally similar to that of Kernberg. In regard to the genesis of narcissistic conditions she, however, draws attention to the importance of the mother's emotional unavailability during the separation - individuation phase. She claims that the child who becomes narcissistic and is unable to overcome the defensive splitting is typically a child deprived of its mother. This loss causes fears about engulfment and abandonment. According to Mahler, premature disruption between mother and child tends to develop the narcissistic condition. She feels that if mother and child separate before the child attains object constancy, it leaves the child impaired with respect to forming stable relationships with others

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6) Mahler, M. The Psychological Birth of the Child, New York: International Universities Press, 1975.

as he will constantly search for the unattainable union with the lost mother of infancy.

Drawing in part on Kernberg's and Mahler's writings, Masterson [7] argues that the mother's withdrawal from the child during the separation - individuation process results in an abandonment depression. Thus the child experiences his individuation as resulting in loneliness and abandonment with concomitant feelings of nger, depression, helplessness and emptiness. According to Masterson, a child who feels so gravely threatened by his own aggressive feelings attempts to compensate himself for his experiences of rage and envy with fantasies of his own uniqueness and omnipotence. These fantasies, together with the internalized images of good parents with which he attempts to defend himself become the core of a "grandiose conception of self". However since the grandiose self consists in Kernberg's words of "the devaluated shadowy images of self and others", the narcissistic individual constantly experiences intense feelings of emptiness, boredom and inauthenticity. Psychoanalytic theory views these affects as a disturbance in the experience of the self resulting

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7) Masterson, J. Treatment of the Borderline Adolescent: A Developmental Approach. New York: John Wiley Publications 1972.

in a loss of inner direction and a repetitious search for the externally satisfying objects. This search for excitement drives the individual into a wide range of interactions, but as the challenge of new encounters quickly fades and personal conquests grow stale, the search only reinforces the subjective experience of emptiness. is aimless groping can be properly described as a state of longing accompanied by an inability to designate the object of longing.

In his article "The American Icarus Revisited", Alan J. Eisnitz[8] dwells on the importance of narcissism in understanding of the notion of boredom. He sees Icarus's flight as doomed to failure, as Icarus constantly hovers between a regressive contact with mother earth and the flight to the paternal sphere of heaven. The result is ultimately frustration and boredom. Similarly, the narcissistic search for intimacy (mother earth) is constantly contradicted by his attempts to gain freedom. Again, the end result is frustration and boredom.

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8) Eisnitz, A. "A Discussion on the Paper by J.L. Weinberger and J.J. Muller on "The American Icarus Revisited: Phallic Narcissism and Boredom" Internat. Journal of Psycho-Analysis (1), 55 p.587

A kind of "blind optimism", according to Otto Kernberg, protects the narcissistic patient from the dangers around and within him, particularly from dependence on others, who are perceived as without exception undependable. The denial of dependency breeds, however, even greater internal and interactional conflict. The reason for this is, that dependency needs are so basic and primitive, that their persistent denial evokes a greater degree of feeling, which generates internally basic questions of identity, self-worth, separation anxiety, chronic emptiness and frustration. Individuals with denied dependency find it difficult to trust and accept positive feelings from others. They often unconsciously sabotage such efforts or invite rejection. This behaviour confirms their feelings about themselves and their fixed view of the world as cold and uncaring. The denial also involves reaction-formation, whereby dependency strivings are disguised by their opposite action. Exaggerated pursuits and feats of unusual independence in the guise of daring actions or other expressions of virility often serve to conceal an underlying need and fear of intimacy and emotional closeness.

The fear of emotional dependence, together with the manipulative and exploitative approach to personal relations makes it impossible for narcissistic

individuals to form meaningful and satisfying relationships. Early experiences of severe disappointment and abandonment prevent the building up of congruent object relations and subsequently the narcissistic individual never succeeds in building up enduring representations of 'good' and 'bad' images. Narcissistic patients are particularly impaired in this aspect of internal functioning, since their pathology is so closely linked to the separation of good and bad introjects. Vacillating between over-idealization and devaluation of others, they are always in constant search for an "only good" object whose all loving image would help them to establish lasting self representations and be the source of their comfort pleasures and satisfactions. The search however is always unsuccessful, as no object can live up to their expectations. Similarly, when they feel disappointed in the current object of their choice they tend to desert it and to split off its "all bad" image from the wishful "all good" one, that subsequently would be projected onto a new person. As a result of this dissociative process, other people, are used as possessions compensating for the narcissist's absent psychological structures. Utilizing relationships as a self-esteem regulator, the narcissistic individual sees people as either a devalued class of objects worshipfully mirroring his

illusionary grandiosity or perceives them as prized and valued objects whom he idealizes and attempts to emulate. This implies that what the narcissistic individual yearns for in others is not the particular person, but the function the person serves. This particular form of object relationship described by Anna Freud[9] and others as "the need satisfying object" is typical of the narcissistic condition and reflects the narcissistic search for a missing segment of their own psychological structure.

It is this "narcissistic syndrome" then, which I perceive to be the "subtext" of virtually all Lermontov texts.

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9) Freud, A. Normality and Pathology in Childhood: Assessment of Development. New York: International Universities Press, 1965.

2.3 Narcissistic Theory and Lermontov's Work

In the present chapter I intend to examine the literary manifestations of the narcissistic syndrome in Lermontov's work as a whole, in order to illustrate comprehensively the mechanism of splitting and idealization in the aesthetic transformation which the author gives it. In my demonstration of the literary expression of the narcissistic condition in Lermontov's work I range freely from genre to genre following a psychological progression rather than a strict chronological order.

As was already stated in the previous chapter, the narcissistic individual often idealizes external objects, viewing them as totally good and powerful, thus assuring himself that the external object can protect him from the bad and destructive objects. The idealization may work in the reverse fashion as well. The individual may feel omnipotent in an attempt to deny any threat from the bad objects. But, in both instances, the idealization cannot be maintained as there exists a basic incapacity to sustain and tolerate ambivalence of feeling. It is this limitation that blurs the perception of reality and sets the self-defeating and self-destructive cycle into motion. The troubled ego is like a hare hunted by hounds; whichever way it turns it runs into a different danger. If the total self takes

refuge in good objects it risks disintegration and if, in despair, it flees from all object relationships, it runs into the loss of itself by feeling emptied and having nothing with which to maintain the sense of being alive. Virtually all Lermontov's themes should be seen in the light of the just stated. We may begin by examining the theme of nature.

Lermontov's idealization of nature makes considerable sense in the foregoing context. Nature is commonly seen as a mother figure, a source of goodness, nurturance and beauty. Identification with nature, which is a common motif in Lermontov's work, revives his early relationship to his idealized mother and expresses the joy, contentment and tranquility he once felt when he was securely held by her boundless goodness. This emphasis on the nurturing role of nature is highly significant, as bereft of his mother in early childhood, the poet idealizes nature and sees it as a source of love and affirmation.

Я вопрошал природу,и она
Меня в свои объятия приняла,
В лесу холодном в грозный час метели
Я сладость пил с ее волшебных уст, 1:232 /1/

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1) All Russian quotes are from Polnoe sobranie sochinenij v chetyrekh tomakh Eykenbaum, B (red.) M.-L., 061Z, 1948 subsequent references to this edition will appear in the text indicating the volume followed by page number.

I entreated nature, and she
Accepted me into her arms
In a cold forest at a threatening hour
of a snow storm
I drank sweetness from her magic lips.
.I.B.

In his Caucasian hymn, written in rhythmic prose Lermontov greets the blue mountains of the Caucasus that fostered him in childhood and exclaims :

"...вы взлелеяли детство мое;вы носили меня на своих одичалых хребтах,облаками меня одевали,вы к небу меня приучили,и я с той поры все мечтаю об вас да о небе." 1:287

You nourished my childhood; you bore me on your wild looking crests and clothed me in your clouds; you made me friends with heavens, and since then I have been dreaming always of you.
A.L.:467[2]

And in another poem dedicated to the Caucasus "Kavkaz" (1830) the memories of the inaccessible landcape blend tenderly with the memories of his lost mother :

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2) All quotes from Lermontov's translated poetry are from: Liberman, A. Mikhail Lermontov: Major Poetical Works, Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1983 and will appear in the text as A.L. followed by page number. In some instances when the Liberman edition does not include the poem quoted I shall give my own prose translations. These will be marked as I.B.

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